

Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Muscat



سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التجارة والصناعة
مسقط

Ref: MCI/MO/ 226

Date: 26 March 2006

The Honorable William Thomas
Chairman, Ways and Means Committee
United States House of Representatives
2208 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thomas,

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to work with you on the passage of the US-Oman Free Trade Agreement and I welcome your interest in our labor laws. Over the last few years Oman has made significant progress in reforming our laws to comply with the International Labor Organization ("ILO") core labor standards. We are currently consulting with the ILO to further modernize our laws and practices, taking into account the ILO standards. Therefore, Oman makes the following commitments:

1. Oman is hosting an ILO delegation in April of this year in order to determine how to incorporate ILO Convention 98 into our labor laws. Oman will then seek the views of the Council of Oman, the Council of Ministers, the Chamber of Commerce & Industry, representative committees and other interested parties (hereinafter, "Interested Parties"). Thus, Oman will be able to issue a Ministerial Decision, after consultation with Interested Parties, no later than October 31, 2006 that incorporates the standards of ILO Convention 98 into Omani labor laws.
2. The Ministerial Decision referenced in number 1 above will clarify that Article (106) of the Omani Labour Law allows workers, at their option, to be reinstated for any termination that resulted from lawful union activity.
3. After consultation with Interested Parties, Oman will issue a Royal Decree amending Royal Decree 35/2003 (the Omani Labor Law) by no later than October 31, 2006 that states that more than one representative committee may be formed in order to represent workers in their relations with a single enterprise.

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4. After consultation with Interested Parties, Oman will issue a Royal Decree amending Royal decree 35/2003, as noted in point 3 above to amend Articles (108-110) of the Labour Law to reflect that each representative committee may belong to the Main Representative Committee and that other main representative bodies may be formed. This action will be taken no later than October 31, 2006.
5. After consultations with Interested Parties, Oman will issue a Ministerial Decision by no later than October 31, 2006 ensuring that penalties for anti-union discrimination are adequate to deter acts of discrimination.
6. After consultations with the ILO and with Interested Parties, Oman will issue a Ministerial Decision by no later than October 31, 2006 that will ensure that technical standards for strikes do not exceed the standards of the ILO.
7. As provided by the Basic Law of Oman, Oman does seek the views of Interested Parties, before making any changes in the legislation and will commit to continue this practice in the future.
8. After consultations with Interested Parties, Oman will amend Ministerial Decisions 135/2004 & 136/2004 by no later than October 31, 2006 in order to remove all government involvement in representative committees' activities.

Yours sincerely,

(MAQBOOL ALI SULTAN)
MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

